MIT's Oldest and Largest Newspaper

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The Tech

Established 1881

Volume 141, Number 6

Thursday, March 25, 2021

WEATHER, p. 2

THU: 67°F | 55°F
AM Shower.

FRI: 65°F | 45°F
Cloudy.

SAT: 53°F | 40°F
Mostly Sunny.

JOANNA LIN—THE TECH

Over a hundred people gathered at the steps of Cambridge City Hall Sunday evening for a vigil dedicated to the victims of the shootings in Atlanta, Georgia last week.

Faculty discuss climate action, first-year credit limit, underrepresented minority recruitment at meeting

Data on percentage of URMs and women among students and faculty shows growth

By Kristina Chen
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Faculty members heard and discussed presentations describing recruitment and retention of underrepresented minority faculty and students, proposed changes to the first-year credit limit, MIT's climate action activities, and nominations for faculty committees at the March 17 faculty meeting held over Zoom.

Underrepresented minority faculty and students

Provost Martin Schmidt PhD '88 presented a report on MIT's progress toward "increased diversity in the faculty and graduate student population." This report has been presented each year since 2004. Schmidt mentioned that Institute Community and Equity Officer John Dozier and Associate Provost Tim Jamison are developing an Institute strategic action plan as part of MIT's larger efforts surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Schmidt presented data on the percentage of underrepresented minority (URM) undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty at MIT from 1997 to 2021. Schmidt said that there has been a "slow increase in the percentage of our community that are underrepresented in the faculty," a "greater" increase in percentage of graduate students, and "even more" of an increase for undergraduates.

Schmidt also presented data on graduate student recruiting for entry year 2020. Of 30,699 applicants, 1,932 were URMs (including Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Native Ha-

Faculty Meeting, Page 8

IN SHORT

Half-term class finals will take place March 30 to April 2.

MIT community members working or studying in Massachusetts should **pre-register for COVID-19 vaccines** and update their vaccine status at *covidvaccine.mit.edu.*

The deadline to submit nominations for the **MIT Awards** is March 26.

Interested in **joining *The Tech*?** Email *join@tech.mit.edu.*

Send news and tips to *news@tech.mit.edu.*

GSC Advocacy Subcommittee proposes recommendations for 2021–22 stipend rates

Subcommittee considers living wage, peer competitiveness, recommends 4.5% stipend increase and increase of $3,000 to grant for graduate students with children

By Vyshnavi Vennelakanti
STAFF REPORTER

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) was informed about the 2021 Graduate Stipend Committee recommendations presented to the Deans' Council in a March 16 email.

A 4.5% increase in stipend was deemed appropriate after an analysis, taking into account the living wage and peer competitiveness criteria. An increase of $3,000 to the Grant for Graduate Students with Children was also proposed while advocating restricting departments from paying less than the agreed upon base stipend rate.

The committee also noted that both the stock market and MIT's own financial performance are trending favorably. Thus, the committee deemed these recommendations feasible and well-justified when combined with substantial optimism over "increased federal research funding and the outlook for returning to a new normal over the coming months."

The committee consists of seven student members and four staff and faculty members. In an email to *The Tech*, Nick Allen, Denise Tellbach, and Jonathan Behrens, student members of the committee, detailed the formation of the committee.

Allen wrote that GSC Housing and Community Affairs (HCA) has been involved in stipend recommendations "for nearly two decades." However, in 2021, HCA

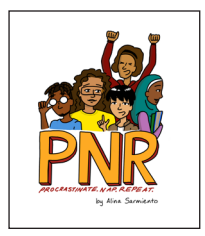
Graduate Stipend, Page 2

CLOSURE

An exclusive in-person Commencement is not worth it. **OPINION, p. 6**

TALKING ABOUT RACE

Language should not be used to disguise racism. **OPINION, p. 7**



PNR

Ideal system. **FUN, p. 5**

INSECTS

You are not a cicada. **CAMPUS LIFE, p. 3**

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Campus Life 3
Fun Pages 4
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WEATHER

The sky weeps for midterm week

By Masha Geogdzhayeva and Renbin Liu

Although the weather here in Boston will bless us today with one more day of sunshine and ridiculously high temperatures, don't expect it to last. Temperatures will start heading down towards the weekend and into next week, with showers Friday morning and Sunday afternoon. So, instead of waiting for your day off to go out... is taking that midterm outdoors *really* such a bad idea?

The impending rain would help with the rain deficit in the Boston area, but rain activities in other parts of the country may be catastrophic. The South is bracing for another round of severe weather with thunderstorms, damaging winds, large hails, and strong tornadoes. This system came after a strong weather system last week that devastated communities in the South with 49 tornadoes. This weather pattern is typical for the South during spring when storm systems intensify with the help of warm and humid air from the Gulf of Mexico.

Extended Forecast

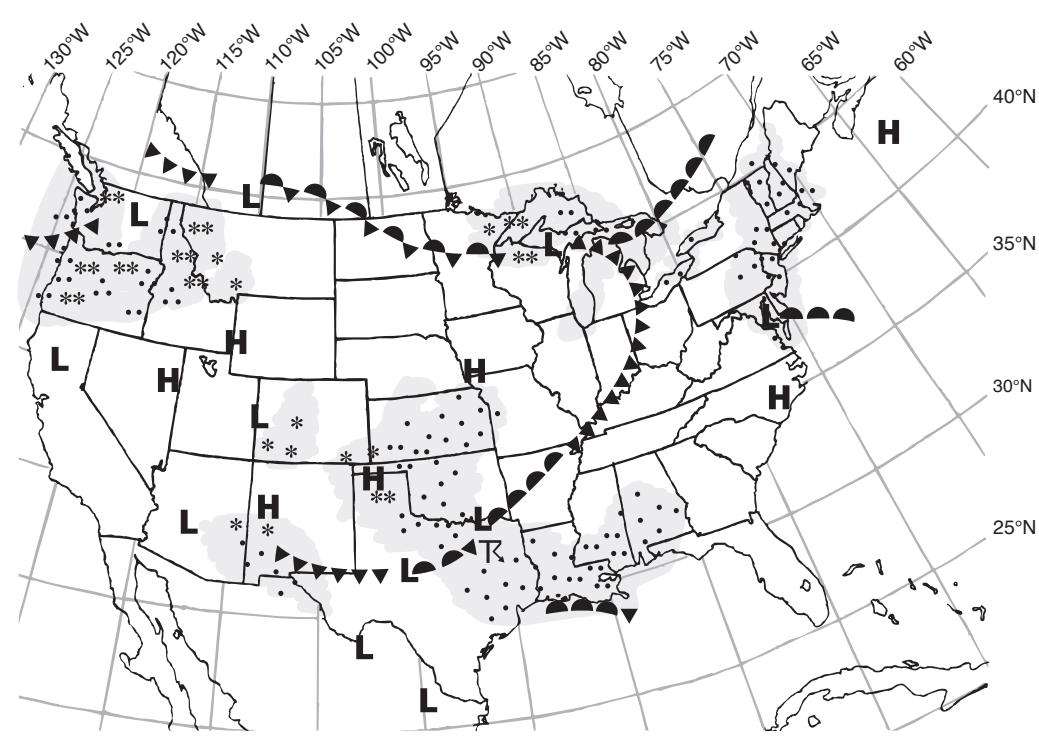
Today: AM shower and fog possible, then cloudy. High around 67°F (19°C). Southwest winds around 3-5 mph.

Tonight: Cloudy. Low around 55°F (13°C). Southwest winds around 6-9 mph.

Friday: Chance of showers. High around 65°F (18°C) and low around 45°F (7°C). South winds around 13-21 mph with 37 mph gusts.

Saturday: Mostly sunny. High around 53°F (12°C) and low around 40°F (4°C). Northwest winds around 10-13 mph.

Sunday: Rain. High around 50°F (10°C) and low around 39°F (4°C). Southeast winds around 11-16 mph.



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Thursday, March 25th, 2021

Weather Systems	Weather Fronts	Precipitation Symbols			Other Symbols
			Snow	Rain	
H High Pressure	Trough	Showers	* ▽	• ▽	Fog
L Low Pressure	Warm Front	Light	*	•	Thunderstorm
§ Hurricane	Cold Front	Moderate	**	••	Haze
	Stationary Front	Heavy	⁂	⁘	Compiled by MIT Meteorology Staff and *The Tech*

There is much 'left to be done,' particularly for graduate student families

Graduate Stipend, from Page 1

formed an Advocacy Subcommittee "to serve the role of Stipend Committee" and "advocate for graduate students on other related topics."

Allen mentioned that the Advocacy Subcommittee is currently chaired by Denise Tellbach and himself, while the membership "is open to all interested graduate students."

Allen noted that the faculty and staff were involved "mostly later in the process" and that the staff and faculty "played an important advisory role and helped with the framing of the recommendations" while the "GSC conducted the analysis."

Allen wrote that these were "consensus recommendations of the Stipend Committee" approved by the GSC Executive Committee. Input was taken from the entire GSC and graduate student organizations during the process.

"Multiple important questions related to graduate support" are being addressed through these recommendations followed by focusing on fixing the "biggest gaps in support," Allen wrote. Recommendations to adjust both the "standard stipend rate" and a "set of policies" based on "survey data, GSC member input, economic indicators, and stakeholder advice" are made most years.

While the survey data reveal "improved graduate student financial security and well-being" through the Stipend Committee, there is much "left to be done," according to Allen. The committee wants the basic cost coverage to be "as encompassing as possible." Some of the challenges include "rising costs, particularly for housing and childcare."

While "funding structures vary across departments and programs," essential costs of living while working at MIT do not, Allen pointed out. The committee strives to ensure that graduate students have the liberty to make "important life decisions," such as raising children, "without having to sacrifice degree progress or financial stability."

The GSC and Office of the Vice Chancellor agreed to preserve "a living wage adjustment" since 2008; several agreements have been made recently, such as "major reductions" in PhD students on partial appointment, the creation of the Grant for Graduate Students with Children, and an active involvement to ensure complete U.S. government benefits to student veterans.

According to the presentation, the stipend recommendations stem from three factors: peer school analysis, living wage analysis and equity factors.

Peer school analysis calls for an "attractive funding package" while keeping the "research costs competitive." This analysis reveals that Stanford stipends have grown "70% faster than MIT's since 2015," creating a $5,200 gap in "offer letter value." Similar comparison by nominal wage with Berkeley, Harvard, and Columbia shows that "MIT remains behind peer institutions in high-cost cities."

Living wage analysis reveals that MIT's graduate benefits should cover "unavoidable costs" of working at MIT while maintaining or improving "purchasing power" over time. Although basic MIT support of 100% stipend covers unavoidable expenses of domestic, off-campus and international, on-campus students, much can be improved with respect to domestic parent graduate students in Westgate.

While "departments can set doctoral RA/TA stipends" to a value "between 90 and 115% of the base rate," it is observed that a 90% stipend does not cover "any student's survival budget," according to the presentation.

"Adjusting for rent trend" reveals an improvement in MIT's purchasing power since 2003, however, with "MIT losing ground to Stanford since 2018." For campus transfers, "on-campus Stanford student has more income than an on-campus MIT student."

Equity factors suggest that the stipend should assist those students who are "most disadvantaged" by the U.S. public policy. Delving further into the various equity dimensions, the widely different problems of "higher expenses" and "fewer options" for international students and students with dependents are studied. It is concluded that while "MIT cannot fix structural disadvantages," the "harm done by them can be corrected."

While "family costs have increased considerably" with the "main cost-driver" being "on-campus family rents," there has not been an increase in stipends. Eight percent of MIT graduate families reportedly "often do not have enough to eat," while 33% of them see "cost of living" among their "largest obstacles to academic progress."

Half of MIT graduate families saw "income fall short of expenses" and expected it to be short next year. Graduate Families Support Working Group recommends "centralization and increase of financial support for students with children."

There are two grants specific to students with families: the family food grant and grant for graduate students with children 2020–2021. Both of these grants are in their final year.

The two major recommendations of the Stipend Committee based on the analysis above are eliminating sub-100% stipends, and improving food security and family assistance by increasing case family assistance to at least $5,000.

These recommendations can be achieved by ensuring a 4.5% increase in stipend "to avoid losing more ground to Staford" and also due to the fact that "at least 2.2% increase is needed to maintain current standard of living."

The committee awaits further communication from MIT leadership on this matter over the coming weeks, and encourages anyone interested in advocacy to reach out to *gsc-hca-advocacy-chair@mit.edu.*

WENBO'S WALKS

Cicadas used to live in my neighborhood

Sometimes, that's just a minor side plot of *Descendants 3*

By Wenbo Wu
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

The other day I was approaching the tracks just before Vassar Street to get my COVID-19 test. For the first time ever, the lights were flashing and a train was passing. I couldn't believe my eyes: What I had mistakenly believed to be an outdated and unused set of rails in fact had its function.

It's everyday magic like this on Mass. Ave. that really keeps me going. Sometimes, I can scarcely figure out what to think and cannot believe but what I can see. But for that day, I can smile fondly and recall the mystical train that entered my life and passed by it just as quickly.

Yet that was not all; there was something else peculiar in the air. I couldn't sense it at the time, to be certain, but it spread like venom through my blood and seeped into my mind. Sometimes people speak of curses so mute that those who possess them cannot speak of them. Sometimes, that's just a minor side plot of *Descendants 3*.

I sit and wait patiently in the corner of my room, each passing second making it increasingly difficult to be quiet. But sometimes the amount of time that passes between such sittings makes the world go blurry.

I stand up swiftly; darkness pulses through my vision. Maybe I should take a walk. I've been in hibernation for 19 years, after all. I feel the need to stretch my tired joints and molt my previous coat. I'm surrounded by love and people I love deeply, some to the reaches far beyond the moon, yet I struggle to love myself. I fear that I've hibernated for too long.

Back in high school I wrote this poem titled "my chance" for the literary magazine. It detailed my reproach toward the passage of time, how I felt abandoned by a train I had waited so long for. Nearly three years later, it sometimes seems as though nothing has changed. I feel like I'm not even given a chance to board these trains, let alone take hold of these narratives; other times I feel like I'm moving so fast that I get nauseous and lose where I am.

I mean, it wasn't a good poem. It just sorta… was.

But that was the venom that seeped through my veins, the feeling of loss for something that has not yet been lost, the utter condescension of my brain telling me that maybe I'm truly not good enough for any of my aspirations. Life moves too fast. I feel like the driver in the trolley problem, except both paths lead into distinct but somehow identical pillars of concrete. It's not so much of a moral decision; it's just deciding whether or not to flinch, or to even try.

I often take the back alleys of the city when I go on walks now, to avoid people. Aside from the pandemic, I'm afraid that if I have to see people, I'll be forced to confront my own existence and powerlessness. I burrow into the concrete, waiting — no, *wasting* — 17 years of life to emerge from the ground in a frenzy, trying to make up for all the time I lost.

Those are the cicada days, the days when I fear to lose so much, I almost lose everything that makes me whole. But it doesn't have to be like this. Cicadas come and go every two decades or so, but I can and should live my life without their wings weighing me down.

I remember on these walks in the crisp spring air that I am still loved even when life's pace seems out of reach and out of control. Times get tough, but alone I am not, even when I feel as though I am. My friends have always supported me through the highs and lows, and I am forever grateful for each and every one of them.

I remember all the wintry panes of frosted glass that have kept me warm before and the gentle coo of the nightingale during the humid summer nights that have kept me awake. I remember that bad days fall like autumn leaves in magnificent waves of color as life learns to begin anew.

And then I remember you, your eyes reaching into my heart and asking it the questions it's feared to wonder. You, the steady hand that broadens my perspective from concrete dichotomy to showing me that there are three, four, or indeed, an infinite number of choices and paths that I could steer onto instead. You, here with me, right here, right now, reading these words and wondering if this paragraph could possibly be about you.

So with that, I shed the old and usher in the new. This past year has been difficult, and sometimes in its shadow I forget how fortunate I am to have a chance at all. But I know things will be alright, and I'm willing to work through life's problems to iron out the wrinkles. I suppose it's time for my own metamorphosis so that I can spread my wings with you all by my side. Just as long as I don't turn into a cicada, though.

FUNFUNFUNF

La Verdes

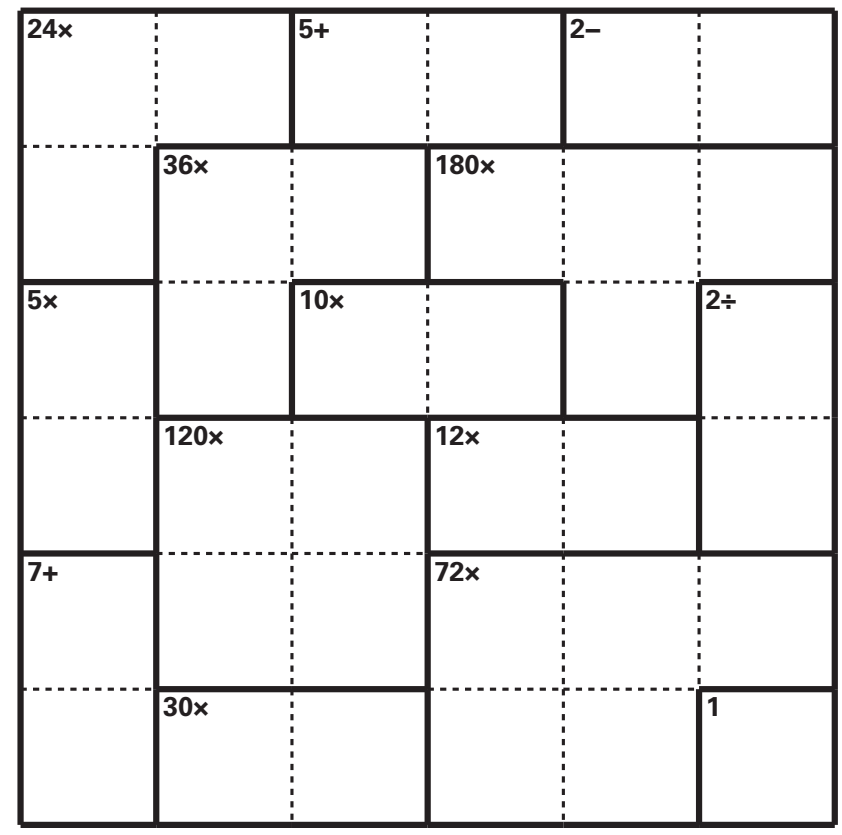
Solution, page 8

	7					2		
	5	8		3				1
			4		5	3	9	
			5			9	2	4
			8		3			
1	2	5			9			
	1	9	3		6			
7				9		5	6	
		6					1	

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

Dunkin'

Solution, page 8



Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column and row contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1–6. Follow the mathematical operations for each box.

Kiddie Comforts by Brad Wilber

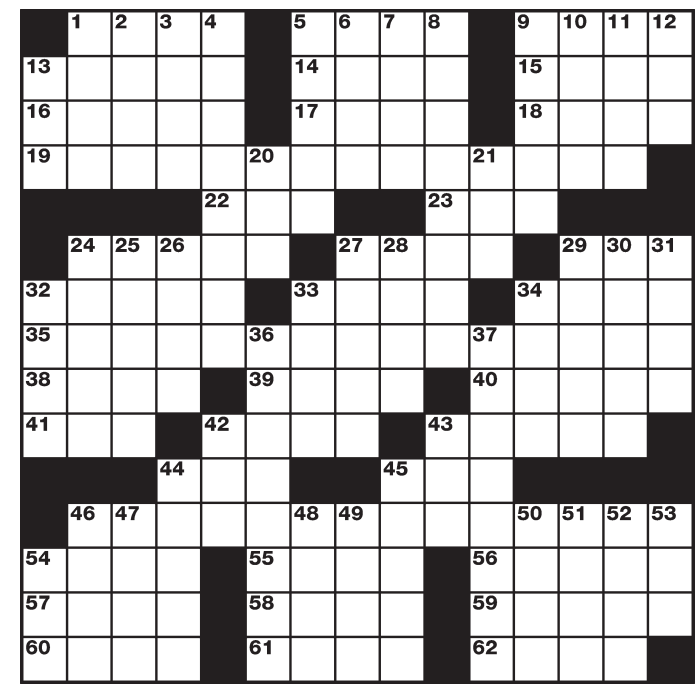
Solution, page 8

ACROSS

1 Magician's stick
5 "Half" prefix for circle
9 Long-tailed lab rodents
13 River's flood barrier
14 Year-end school dance
15 Orchestral woodwind
16 Solos for opera divas
17 Teheran's country
18 Played a trumpet
19 Tales told just before "lights-out"
22 Car fuel
23 "Are we having __ yet?"
24 Longtime pal
27 Botanical sunburn soother
29 Bar bill
32 Without a companion
33 "Scat!"
34 Curly-leafed cabbage
35 Bed cover that reduces anxiety
38 Annoys
39 Performer's signals
40 Jury members
41 Where a rainbow forms
42 Steals from
43 Paid out
44 Writing utensil
45 Life story, for short
46 Cuddly toys such as teddy bears
54 Rain heavily
55 Historical periods
56 Scent-detecting organs
57 Granola grains
58 Number inside a shoe
59 Overused, as a phrase
60 Factually correct
61 Sesame-__ bun
62 Huge bodies of water

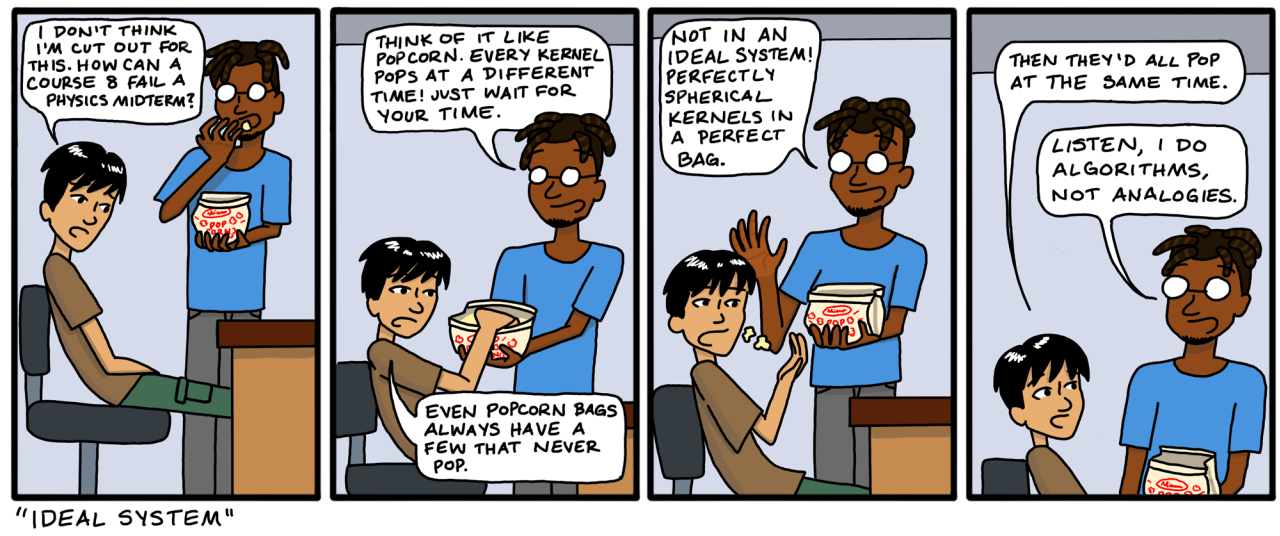
DOWN

1 Once existed
2 Enthusiastic, as a fan
3 Having no clutter
4 Fashion-line creator
5 Undercover agents
6 Makes a mistake
7 Watery castle barrier
8 "You can't scam me!"
9 Springtime songbird
10 Competent
11 Tips of socks
12 Work with needle and thread
13 Chemist's workroom
20 Might possibly
21 Regret doing
24 Store salesperson
25 Stallone's boxer role
26 Burden
27 "I remember now!"
28 Soft tennis shots
29 Occupied, as a chair
30 Watchful and ready
31 Wagers
32 Without a warranty
33 Movie ticket remnant
34 Joint above a shin
36 "It was me who did it!"
37 Assigns to a job
42 Basketball official, for short
43 Moral misdeed
44 Handbag



45 Headquartered (in)
46 Fly high
47 Ballerina's skirt
48 A Great Lake
49 Befuddled state
50 "The __ the merrier"
51 Japan's continent
52 Allows
53 Point opposite NNW
54 Stew-cooking vessel

Ideal System by Alina Sarmiento



"IDEAL SYSTEM"

FUN FUN FUN

OPINION OPINION OPINION

GUEST COLUMN

The cloak of racism

Robert Aaron Long did not simply have a 'bad day'

By Kelvin Green II

A couple weeks ago, I wrote about operational decentralization as the friend of racism. In the wake of Robert Aaron Long's murder of Soon Chung Park, 74; Hyun Jung Grant, 51; Suncha Kim, 69; Yong Ae Yue, 63; Delaina Ashley Yaun, 33; Xiaojie Tan, 49; Daoyou Feng, 44; and Paul Andre Michels, 54, in Atlanta on March 16, I have been particularly perplexed by what hides racism so that it can live on in darkness killing, stealing, and destroying. As a descendant of the Mattaponi, Pamunkey, and Chickahominy tribes and as an African-American I am not foreign to the seemingly ineffable racist acts of violence and white supremacy. I acknowledge that acts of violence, especially of the kind displayed by Long, exist within the confines of racist, sexist, and classist realities which we cannot allow ourselves to see as innate, but socially-constructed.

We must reject the notion that *sticks and stones may break our bones, but words will never hurt us.* When Captain Jay Baker of Atlanta stated that Long, a 21-year old man who murdered eight people (six of whom were Asian women), had a "bad day," he used two, mono-syllabic words to describe what deserved much more perceptiveness and thought. Language is not a passive act incapable of inflicting damage. How we tell the story of what takes place either heals or destroys us. Moreover, we've heard the old adage that *those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it.* What is missing in this statement or possibly implied is the notion that we cannot forgo repeating history when our language to describe it fails to approach truth or when we operate in denial about the source and motivation driving the events we tell in history. Robert Aaron Long is a white supremacist and one of many in America. His murdering of Asian women was not motivated by a "sexual addiction," rather his fetishization of Asian women is a product of his racist beliefs — like a weed, without cultivation by racist soil his sexual fetishization of Asian women would not germinate. Just because it takes critical thinking to use language which adequately reaches for the truth, does not mean we should give up or sacrifice the right words for a sound bite or quick answer. Long's choice to murder must be contextualized and any effort to divorce race from Long's murderous act is itself an act of violence.

I do not presume to be surprised by Baker's choice of words. He is not alone in failing to speak truthfully about racist violence. As a country, we still sit in the stink of 400 years of violence because we have lied about what happened on this land so much so that when we see white supremacist terror, we marvel. There is a distinction between marveling at a particular violence and marveling at its happening. In America, people who are ignorant by choice or by consequence tend to be marveling because of the latter. Yet, thinking about American history; from the forced removal by white colonizers of people who were indigenous to this land to the genocide by white colonizers of men, women, and children to occupy the land for country; from the kidnapping and enslavement of millions of Africans as chattel by white colonizers to the persistent presence of slavery in the American prison industrial complex; from the federal and state exclusion of people seeking help at our man-made borders to the dehumanization of immigrating people that would normalize placing them in cages; from the violent acts of citizens to the cloaking that singles them out as individuals and not the spitting image of the country they love — all this and more may help to usher clarity in why Baker said Long had a "bad day." When forced to confront American history, time and again, America has opted more on the side of having "bad [days]" than taking accountability and responsibility for both de jure and de facto violence it has perpetrated since before its dated founding.

In her 1993 Nobel lecture, Toni Morrison writes of the woman who provides focus to her lecture, "being a writer she thinks of language partly as a system, partly as a living thing over which one has control, but mostly as agency — as an act with consequences." As users of language we determine whether these "consequences" liberate us or leave us more shackled, more bound, more trapped in cycles of violence. When we talk about Atlanta on March 16, we must talk about race. When we think about the lives that were taken and the grief beset on families, friends, a city, a country, and the world, we must also think about the racial context which undergirds those thoughts. It is imperative we strive toward comprehending the mystifying properties of racism and its enduring hold on our way of life. If we do not talk about race, our language will cloak racism like a thief in the night. And though we may not live to see liberation and the employment of truthful language as common practice, there is one thing I am sure of — we will not arrive to *that* place if we give up.

Kelvin Green II '22 is a member of Chocolate City and the Rho Nu Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and the Assistant Officer on Diversity for the Undergraduate Association.

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Climate and Sustainability Consortium member companies continue work

Faculty Meeting, from Page 1

waiian/Pacific Islander applicants), 11,422 were not URMs (including Asian, white, and unknown applicants), and 17,345 were international student applicants.

26.4% of URM applicants were admitted and 48.3% enrolled, compared to an overall admissions rate of 14.5% and enrollment rate of 51.3%. Schmidt added that there was a 10 point decline in overall yield for graduate programs for entry year 2020, which seemed "to have been a trend across much of" higher education, so "normally, these yield rates would be about 10 points higher."

Schmidt presented data on graduate student recruiting for entry year 2020 with respect to gender. Of 30,699 total applicants, 34.8% were women, of 4,448 admitted, 41.6% were women, and of 2,284 enrolled, 38.8% were women.

Schmidt additionally presented the percentage of women in undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty, from 1962 to 2021. Like the URM percentages, the percentages increased over time, and the highest increase in percentage was for undergraduates, the next highest was for graduate students, and the lowest for faculty members.

The percentages were lower than 50% for all groups. The percentage of all faculty that are women is approximately 25%, and the percentage of science and engineering faculty that are women is approximately 20%.

Schmidt presented data on faculty hiring from fiscal year 2011 to 2020. Between those years, MIT hired 453 faculty members, of which 151 (33%) are women and 48 (11%) are from URM. Among current faculty, 8.5% are from URM, and 24% are women.

In addition to increasing the diversity of student and faculty populations at MIT, Schmidt said that it was also important to "make sure that the communities" that new members are joining "are welcoming and inclusive."

Schmidt described challenges MIT faces in addressing its DEI goals. "One is that the ownership of the decisions around faculty hiring and graduate student recruiting admission" is distributed, so as an institution, MIT needs "to figure out how to make sure that best practices and approaches to improving diversity are being broadly adopted and shared."

Another challenge is having "robust assessments of the effectiveness" of programs created to focus on DEI to ensure that MIT invests in programs with "the largest leverage on the things that are most critical" in achieving its goals.

A third challenge is supporting MIT's "distributed faculty leadership" because some skills for increasing diversity and creating welcoming communities "are not necessarily skills that the faculty have been able to develop in their time at MIT."

The final challenge is accountability and making sure that goals are set and worked toward.

Schmidt also summarized MIT's recent efforts for DEI, including adding senior staff at the Academic Council level, created a department support project to work with department leadership, making commitments to adding distributed staffing with expertise in DEI for each school, and working on the strategic action plan.

Proposals for first-year credit limit

Chair of the Committee on the Undergraduate Program (CUP) Professor Arthur Bahr presented a proposal for changes to the first-year credit limit and to Early Sophomore Standing (ESS).

Bahr described three organizing goals of the CUP which are to create more opportunities for first years to discover intellectual passions, maintain appropriate guardrails for first years transitioning to MIT, and reduce complexity to improve advising and minimize unintended consequences.

The credit limit policies currently described in the rules and regulations of the faculty state that first-year undergraduates can register for a maximum of 54 credit units in the fall term and 57 credit units in the spring term. Additionally, "any undergraduate who has successfully completed one semester at MIT and has accrued at least 96 total units including an appropriate Communication Intensive subject would be eligible for Early Sophomore Standing."

The CUP's experiments in academic years 2020 and 2021 allowed first years to take 48 regular units plus nine discovery units in the fall and 60 regular units plus nine discovery units in the spring. ESS was not offered in either year.

The CUP's provisional recommendations for academic year 2022 are to make the fall credit 54 regular units plus six discovery units (including first-year advising seminars and approved first-year discovery subjects), to make the spring credit 60 regular units plus six discovery units, and to permanently end the practice of offering ESS.

A student forum was held on the provisional recommendations March 15.

The 48-unit fall credit limit recommendation was informed by observation that with 54 units, half-term subjects, "most prominently 6.0001 [Introduction to Computer Science and Programming in Python]," were becoming more popular, resulting in students taking five classes for part of the semester and four classes for the other half, when the original intention was for students to take four classes and one advising seminar.

However, the lower credit limit resulted in "pressure" for discovery focused classes to "include worthy activities that might get crowded out of a 48-unit course load but weren't obviously oriented toward discovery." This resulted in the recommendations suggesting a return to the previous 54-unit limit.

Bahr also described reasoning for ending ESS. He presented historical data indicating that the number of students accepting ESS has "ballooned in recent years," from less than one percent in 1985 (when ESS began) to nearly 25% in 2019 (the most recent year ESS was offered).

Students with ESS are able to declare a major as first years and usually have access to a faculty advisor in the major. Additionally, the credit limit is removed for students with ESS, and they are graded under regular grading as opposed to A/B/C/NR.

Bahr said that surveyed ESS students "overwhelmingly" wanted to exceed the credit limit. Data from academic years 2018 and 2019 showed that over one third of ESS students took exactly 60 units, and around one third took more than 60 units.

Bahr said that in Spring 2020, without ESS, about as many students chose to take 48 units as those who took 60, and that there was "no significant difference between students who would have been eligible for ESS versus those who would not have."

Bahr added that while increasing the credit limit to 60 could result in additional stress, first years will be able to use A/B/C/NR and flexible P/NR as safety nets. Additionally, "most MIT students sign up for 60 or more units at some point," so being able to test the limits with the first-year safety nets in place "makes sense."

Additionally, for students who would have wanted to take more than 60 units through ESS, "MIT offers a lot of great ways of spending one's time outside the formal classroom," including research, clubs, and athletics. Bahr said that having a 60-unit limit "make spaces" for students to "seek out some of those opportunities that they might not have gravitated toward under ESS."

Member of the CUP Professor Steven Leeb disagreed with the increase in units for the credit limits, saying that the increase to 54 units would "encourage departments to create new six unit classes that will become de facto GIR and major requirements," even once the experiment is over. Additionally, Leeb said that taking a full 60 units could become a "de facto requirement for students" and that eliminating ESS is not "a rational response" to students being unprepared to use ESS units wisely.

Leeb urged faculty to consider the proposal carefully before its formal presentation at the April faculty meeting and vote at the May faculty meeting.

Faculty attendees raised questions in the Zoom chat about ESS, with emphasis placed on the importance of advising alongside policies.

Plans for climate change efforts

Vice President for Research Maria Zuber, Associate Provost Richard Lester, Dean of the School of Engineering Anantha Chandrakasan, Head of the Materials Science and Engineering Department Jeffrey Grossman, and Professor Elsa Olibetti PhD '07 described MIT's work toward its new Climate Action Plan (CAP) and other climate efforts.

Zuber said that the Climate Action Advisory Committee (CAAC) has collected community input through various channels, including climate action symposia, faculty engagement sessions, and student forums.

From this community input, the CAAC has "overwhelmingly" heard two things: first, that MIT needs to accelerate progress, and second, that MIT needs to better integrate different ongoing activities associated with climate and clean energy.

Zuber said that MIT can make the biggest impact through research, innovation, and education. In addition to low carbon energy centers and startups within The Engine from MIT's previous CAP, the new CAP will include the Climate Grand Challenges and the MIT Climate and Sustainability Consortium (MCSC).

Zuber described additional opportunities for MIT to participate in climate efforts. She listed targeting faculty hiring and incorporating climate and sustainability topics in curriculum for education, achieving a carbon-neutral MIT by 2026, creating a more sustainable portfolio by committing to net-zero carbon investments by 2050 and participating in Climate Action 100+, and engaging with more receptive governments.

She also expressed an intention to create a climate nucleus that brings together MIT's climate efforts.

Lester gave a presentation on the Climate Grand Challenges, launched July 2020. The Climate Grand Challenges involve the implementation of research proposals at MIT to develop or improve technologies to adapt to climate-related changes.

The challenges received 94 letters of interest from 385 researchers during its first phase in late 2020. Of these letters, 28 projects were selected for the next phase, which will be worked on for the next six months to develop detailed plans with budgets, timelines, estimates of potential impact, and identification of external partners.

At the end of the year, some of the projects will be selected for additional development and fundraising, "with the anticipation that they'll become flagship multi-year grand challenge projects."

Chandrakasan, Grossman, and Olivetti presented information about MCSC, which "brings together an influential group of industry leaders, with the goal of accelerating the most impactful ideas to practical solutions" for addressing climate change.

The consortium was announced in late January 2020 with 13 inaugural members from sectors including transportation, manufacturing, food and agriculture, construction, communications, textiles, consumer electronics, and computing.

Chandrakasan said the list of companies would continue to be expanded and that the member companies "are not only deeply committed to changes within their organization but also influencing change across the industries.

MCSC member companies pay a consortium fee to support activities such as industry pathways, UROPs, postdoctoral associates, entrepreneurship activities, workshops, and education activities.

Grossman added that the work of the companies will take a "cross industry sector approach" that will maximize MIT's ability to "coalesce insights across disciplines and put together teams with the right expertise."

Olivetti outlined the pathways to accelerate implementation of the MCSC's work. She said that the goal is to "get to the smallest manifestation of a problem [so] that we can make progress fast" as well as to consider the context of the solutions and how they will be used.

Olivetti described engagement among students, including a climate superUROP intended to launch Fall 2021, the development of a climate.009 analogous to existing capstone courses, and a postdoctoral fellows program.

Nominations for faculty committee positions

Chair of the Committee on Nominations Professor Tomás Palacios also presented the slate of nominations for Associate Chair and Secretary of the Faculty, as well as for standing committees of the faculty.

Palacios said that the nominations include faculty members from 16 different academic students and all five schools. The slate is "approximately 37%" women.

Additional nominees can be added at the April faculty meeting, where the final slate will be decided upon. The nominations will be voted on at the May faculty meeting.

Solution to La Verdes

from page 5

3	7	4	9	6	1	2	8	5
9	5	8	7	3	2	6	4	1
2	6	1	4	8	5	3	9	7
6	8	3	5	1	7	9	2	4
4	9	7	8	2	3	1	5	6
1	2	5	6	4	9	7	3	8
8	1	9	3	5	6	4	7	2
7	4	2	1	9	8	5	6	3
5	3	6	2	7	4	8	1	9

Solution to Shinkansen

from page 4

9	7	3	8	5	1	2	6	4
4	2	6	7	3	9	5	8	1
1	5	8	2	4	6	3	9	7
2	9	5	3	1	7	8	4	6
3	8	1	5	6	4	9	7	2
7	6	4	9	2	8	1	5	3
5	3	9	6	7	2	4	1	8
8	4	7	1	9	3	6	2	5
6	1	2	4	8	5	7	3	9

Solution to Dunkin'

from page 5

6	2	1	4	5	3
2	4	3	6	1	5
1	3	2	5	6	4
5	1	6	3	4	2
3	5	4	1	2	6
4	6	5	2	3	1

Solution to Kiddie

from page 5

■	W	A	N	D	■	S	E	M	I	■	R	A	T	S
L	E	V	E	E	■	P	R	O	M	■	O	B	O	E
A	R	I	A	S	■	I	R	A	N	■	B	L	E	W
B	E	D	T	I	M	E	S	T	O	R	I	E	S	■
■	■	■	G	A	S	■	■	F	U	N	■	■	■	■
■	C	R	O	N	Y	■	A	L	O	E	■	T	A	B
A	L	O	N	E	■	S	H	O	O	■	K	A	L	E
S	E	C	U	R	I	T	Y	B	L	A	N	K	E	T
I	R	K	S	■	C	U	E	S	■	P	E	E	R	S
S	K	Y	■	R	O	B	S	■	S	P	E	N	T	■
■	■	■	P	E	N	■	■	B	I	O	■	■	■	■
■	S	T	U	F	F	E	D	A	N	I	M	A	L	S
P	O	U	R	■	E	R	A	S	■	N	O	S	E	S
O	A	T	S	■	S	I	Z	E	■	T	R	I	T	E
T	R	U	E	■	S	E	E	D	■	S	E	A	S	■

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